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## BC High to set up victim hot line

By Walter V. Robinson, Globe Staff, 3/7/2002

**T**he acting president of Boston College High School said yesterday that the school will set up a hot line and contact all its graduates to see if there are other victims of three Jesuit priests who allegedly molested some students at the school two decades ago.

William T. Kemeza, who on Tuesday suspended the only one of the three priests who was still at the Dorchester school, said he was "saddened and shocked" by the allegations against the three priests.

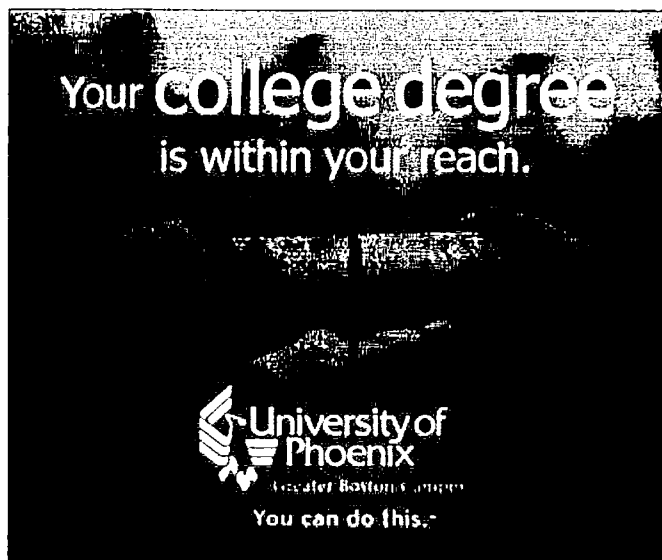
Kemeza, who is also the principal, and John Dunn, a BC High trustee, said last night that Alberto Godenzi of the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, a specialist in dealing with child sexual abuse, will today provide the school a plan for a hot line that will be staffed by trained counselors.

BC High will send letters to all of its alumni, encouraging them to come forward if they were the victims of sexual abuse at the school.

"We want to clear the air, help the victims, and reach out to anyone who contacts us," Dunn said.

The Jesuit New England Province, which will be investigating the allegations, did not respond to questions from the Globe yesterday about whether its files on the three priests reflected any complaints about them during the years the alleged abuse occurred in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Suspended by Kemeza was the Rev. Stephen F. Dawber, S.J., 63, who was



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teaching history and social studies at BC High. It was a step Kemeza took after the Globe asked him about a former student who had recounted for the newspaper how Dawber allegedly lured him into a sexual encounter in the mid-1970s.

Yesterday, a second BC High graduate said in an interview that Dawber molested him as well, in a Dorchester house where several of the school's priests resided at the time.

"There is a lot of shame and a lot of guilt associated with what happened to me. It's with me all the time," said the man, who is now 43, successful, and married with children. "But I have nothing to be ashamed of, and nothing I should feel guilty for."

Both of Dawber's alleged victims said they will relate their experiences to Jesuits who are investigating Dawber's behavior.

Today, an attorney for the Jesuit New England Province is scheduled to meet with Suffolk County prosecutors to turn over the names of the Revs. James Talbot and Francis J. McManus, both former BC High teachers. Kemeza said he was uncertain whether Dawber's name will also be given to prosecutors. On Tuesday, an attorney for the province said he expected to turn over the names of some other Jesuits, but declined to say whether any of them had been associated with BC High.

Dawber, Talbot, and McManus have not returned phone calls from the Globe seeking comment this week.

The Globe reported yesterday that at least seven former BC High students say they were molested by Talbot, almost all of them during private wrestling sessions initiated by Talbot. (when?)

In 1980, after eight years at BC High, Talbot was transferred to Cheverus High School in Portland, Maine, another Jesuit school. Two letters obtained by the Globe suggest that he left BC High under a cloud of suspicion about his behavior. Talbot was removed from Cheverus in 1998 after charges surfaced that he molested a student there in the mid-1980s.

Also on Tuesday, the Jesuit province placed McManus on administrative leave from his position as a chaplain at St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, after allegations that he molested one student and groped another in the early 1980s.

The number of Talbot's alleged victims grew to at least 11 yesterday. Two lawyers, Jeffrey A. Newman and Roderick MacLeish Jr., said they were contacted by four other BC High graduates who say they were molested by Talbot.

Kemeza said he had found nothing in BC High's files to suggest that the

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school's Jesuit administrators were made aware of the sexual misbehavior when it allegedly occurred. But he said the school has virtually no personnel files on its priests from that period.

If such files exist, the provincial office is likely to have them. But through a spokesman, Jesuit provincial officials declined yesterday to answer any questions.

At the school itself, however, Kemeza and Dunn fielded many questions.

Dunn, the high school trustee, told reporters: "I do not want the alleged actions of three men to tarnish the reputation of so many good Jesuits who, over 139 years, have left an indelible impression on this city and on so many young men who have benefitted from BC High."

The school today is a far different place than it was when Talbot and McManus were there, though it is still considered by many to be the best Catholic high school in New England. Ninety-nine percent of its students go on to college.

BC High's 1,260 students, all of them boys, receive virtually all their education from lay teachers. A generation ago, only a handful of lay teachers were on hand. Now, there are only five Jesuits among the estimated 100 teachers, according to Kemeza, himself a layman.

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